

Appl. No. 10/682,108
Amdt. dated November 17, 2006
Reply to Office Action of September 19, 2006

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A package comprising:
 - a) an enclosed compartment having a pair of oppositely aligned walls and a perimeter;
 - b) an array of compressible articles retained in said enclosed compartment, said articles having at least one planar surface aligned substantially parallel to at least one of said pair of oppositely aligned walls and being held in compression in a direction that is substantially perpendicular to said planar surface;
 - c) expansion means for allowing said enclosed compartment to be enlarged, said expansion means including a pliable member positioned about said entire perimeter; and
 - d) a release strip bridging said expansion means and capable of being at least partially removed to allow said enclosed compartment to be enlarged by said pliable member; and
 - e) opening means for allowing said package to be opened so that said articles can be removed from said enlarged compartment, said opening means being distinct from said expansion means, said opening means being formed in at least one of said walls.
2. (Original) The package of claim 1 wherein said pliable member is a separate member.
3. (Original) The package of claim 2 wherein said pliable member is an elastic material.
4. (Original) The package of claim 2 wherein said pliable member is a stretchable material.
5. (Original) The package of claim 1 wherein said package and said expansion means are formed from the same material.

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6. (Original) The package of claim 1 wherein said package and said expansion means are integrally formed.
7. (Original) The package of claim 1 wherein at least one of said pair of oppositely aligned walls is a semi-rigid wall.
8. (Original) The package of claim 7 wherein said semi-rigid wall is formed from cardboard.
9. (Original) The package of claim 1 wherein said expansion means allows the volume of said enclosed compartment to be enlarged by at least about 5%.
10. (Previously presented) A package comprising:
 - a) an enclosed compartment having a pair of oppositely aligned walls and a perimeter;
 - b) an array of compressible articles retained in said enclosed compartment, said articles having at least one planar surface aligned substantially parallel to at least one of said pair of oppositely aligned walls and said articles being held in compression in a direction that is substantially perpendicular to said planar surface;
 - c) expansion means for allowing said enclosed compartment to be enlarged, said expansion means including an elastic member secured to said entire perimeter, said elastic member having a first end and a second end;
 - d) a release strip positioned across first and second ends of said elastic member, said release strip capable of being at least partially removed to allow said elastic member to be stretched thereby enabling said enclosed compartment to be enlarged; and
 - e) opening means for allowing said package to be opened so that said articles can be removed from said enlarged compartment, said opening means being formed in at least one of said walls.
11. (Original) The package of claim 10 wherein said opening means is at least one frangible line.

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12. (Original) The package of claim 10 wherein said expansion means allows the volume of said enclosed compartment to be enlarged by at least about 5%.
13. (Original) The package of claim 10 wherein said expansion means allows the volume of said enclosed compartment to be enlarged from between about 5% to about 100%.
14. (Original) The package of claim 13 wherein said expansion means allows the volume of said enclosed compartment to be enlarged from between about 10% to about 50%.
15. (Original) The package of claim 10 wherein said release strip has a width of less than about 30 millimeters.
16. (Previously presented) A package comprising:
 - a) a front wall and a back wall joined to one another by a pair of side walls, and a top wall and a bottom wall joined to said front, back and pair of side walls to form an enclosed compartment having a perimeter;
 - b) an array of compressible articles housed in said enclosed compartment, said articles having at least one planar surface aligned parallel to at least one of said pair of side walls and said articles being held in compression in a direction that is substantially perpendicular to said planar surface;
 - c) expansion means for allowing said enclosed compartment to be enlarged, said expansion means including a pleat formed by folding four adjacent walls inward about said perimeter, said pleat having a first end and a second end;
 - d) a release strip positioned across said first and second ends of said pleat, said release strip capable of being at least partially removed to allow said enclosed compartment to be enlarged; and
 - e) opening means for allowing said package to be opened so that said articles can be removed from said enlarged compartment, said opening means being formed in at least one of said walls.

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17. (Original) The flexible package of claim 16 wherein said expansion means allows the volume of said enclosed compartment to be enlarged by at least about 5%.
18. (Original) The flexible package of claim 16 wherein said release strip is formed from the same material as said package.
19. (Original) The flexible package of claim 16 wherein said release strip is formed from a different material than said package.
20. (Original) The flexible package of claim 16 wherein said release strip has a terminal end and a pull tab is secured to said terminal end.
21. (Original) The flexible package of claim 16 wherein said package is formed from a thermoplastic material.
22. (Original) The flexible package of claim 16 wherein said package is formed from plastic.
23. (Original) The flexible package of claim 16 wherein said array of compressible articles are disposable absorbent articles.
24. (Original) The flexible package of claim 23 wherein said disposable absorbent articles are adult incontinence garments.
25. (Original) The flexible package of claim 16 wherein said release strip is secured to said first and second ends of said pleat by ultrasonics.
26. (Original) The package of claim 1 wherein instructions are included on said package for informing a consumer on how to dispense said compressible articles from said package by

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activating said expansion means whereby the size and volume of said package can be increased prior to opening said package to permit individual or multiple articles to be easily removed.

27. (Original) The package of claim 1 wherein said package is enclosed by a wrapper and instructions are placed between said package and said wrapper for informing a consumer on how to dispense said compressible articles from said package by activating said expansion means whereby the size and volume of said package can be increased prior to opening said package to permit individual or multiple articles to be easily removed.

28. (Original) The package of claim 10 including instructions on said package for informing a consumer on how to dispense said compressible articles from said package by activating said expansion means whereby the size and volume of said package can be increased prior to opening said package to permit individual or multiple articles to be easily removed.

29. (Original) The package of claim 10 wherein said package is enclosed by a clear wrapper and instructions are placed between said package and said wrapper for informing a consumer on how to dispense said compressible articles from said package by activating said expansion means whereby the size and volume of said package can be increased prior to opening said package to permit individual or multiple articles to be easily removed.

30. (Original) The package of claim 16 including instructions on said package for informing a consumer on how to dispense said compressible articles from said package by activating said expansion means whereby the size and volume of said package can be increased.

31. (Original) The package of claim 16 wherein said package is enclosed by a clear wrapper and instructions are placed between said package and said wrapper for informing a consumer on how to dispense said compressible articles from said package by activating said expansion means whereby the size and volume of said package can be increased prior to opening said package to permit individual or multiple articles to be easily removed.

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32. (Previously presented) A package comprising:

- a) an enclosed compartment having a pair of oppositely aligned walls and a perimeter;
- b) an array of compressible articles retained in said enclosed compartment, said articles having at least one planar surface aligned substantially parallel to at least one of said pair of oppositely aligned walls and being held in compression in a direction that is substantially perpendicular to said planar surface;
- c) expansion means for allowing said enclosed compartment to be enlarged, said expansion means including a pliable member positioned about at least a portion of said perimeter;
- d) a release strip bridging said expansion means and capable of being at least partially removed to allow said enclosed compartment to be enlarged by said pliable member; and
- e) a wrapper enclosing said package with instructions placed between said package and said wrapper for informing a consumer on how to dispense said compressible articles from said package by activating said expansion means whereby the size and volume of said package can be increased prior to opening said package to permit individual or multiple articles to be easily removed.

33. (Previously presented) A package comprising:

- a) an enclosed compartment having a pair of oppositely aligned walls and a perimeter;
- b) an array of compressible articles retained in said enclosed compartment, said articles having at least one planar surface aligned substantially parallel to at least one of said pair of oppositely aligned walls and said articles being held in compression in a direction that is substantially perpendicular to said planar surface;
- c) expansion means for allowing said enclosed compartment to be enlarged, said expansion means including an elastic member secured to at least a portion of said perimeter, said elastic member having a first end and a second end;
- d) a release strip positioned across first and second ends of said elastic member, said release strip capable of being at least partially removed to allow said elastic member to be stretched thereby enabling said enclosed compartment to be enlarged;
- e) opening means for allowing said package to be opened so that said articles can be removed from said enlarged compartment, said opening means being formed in at least one of said walls; and

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f) a clear wrapper enclosing said package with instructions placed between said package and said wrapper for informing a consumer on how to dispense said compressible articles from said package by activating said expansion means whereby the size and volume of said package can be increased prior to opening said package to permit individual or multiple articles to be easily removed.

34. (Previously presented) A package comprising:

a) a front wall and a back wall joined to one another by a pair of side walls, and a top wall and a bottom wall joined to said front, back and pair of side walls to form an enclosed compartment having a perimeter, and said top wall being thicker than said bottom wall;

b) an array of compressible articles housed in said enclosed compartment, said articles having at least one planar surface aligned parallel to at least one of said pair of side walls and said articles being held in compression in a direction that is substantially perpendicular to said planar surface;

c) expansion means for allowing said enclosed compartment to be enlarged, said expansion means including a pleat formed by folding four adjacent walls inward about said perimeter, said pleat having a first end and a second end;

d) a release strip positioned across said first and second ends of said pleat, said release strip capable of being at least partially removed to allow said enclosed compartment to be enlarged;

e) opening means for allowing said package to be opened so that said articles can be removed from said enlarged compartment, said opening means being formed in at least one of said walls: and

f) a clear wrapper enclosing said package with instructions placed between said package and said wrapper for informing a consumer on how to dispense said compressible articles from said package by activating said expansion means whereby the size and volume of said package can be increased prior to opening said package to permit individual or multiple articles to be easily removed.

35. (Currently amended) A package comprising:

a) an enclosed compartment having a pair of oppositely aligned walls and a perimeter, and one of said pair of oppositely aligned walls being a top wall which is thicker than said other oppositely aligned walls;

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b) an array of compressible articles retained in said enclosed compartment, said articles having at least one planar surface aligned substantially parallel to at least one of said pair of oppositely aligned walls and being held in compression in a direction that is substantially perpendicular to said planar surface;

c) expansion means for allowing said enclosed compartment to be enlarged, said expansion means including a pleat formed by folding four adjacent walls inward about said perimeter; and

d) a release strip bridging said expansion means and capable of being at least partially removed to allow said enclosed compartment to be enlarged by said pliable member; and

e) opening means for allowing said package to be opened so that said articles can be removed from said enlarged compartment, said opening means being distinct from said expansion means, said opening means being formed in at least one of said walls.